

10 **TITLE:** **CLIP WITH SLIDABLE MEMBER**
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15 **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a clip for an elongated handheld instrument. More specifically,
20 the present invention relates to a slidable member placed upon the clip of a handheld instrument,
for example, a writing instrument. Moreover, the present invention comprises placing
advertising upon a pen clip in order to get the attention of a consumer. The present invention also
relates to a method for getting the attention of a consumer by placing advertising upon a
handheld writing instrument. Additionally, the present invention relates to a method of relieving
25 emotional stress by providing a writing instrument with which the user can fidget, while at the
same time repeatedly exposing, or continuously maintaining, the advertising indicia in the user's
attention.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Clips upon writing instruments have been common for almost a century. It is also well known that advertising can be put upon writing instruments to get the attention of consumers. The advertising has taken the form of printing upon a pen barrel or clip. Such advertising has the disadvantage of utilizing only the visual sense for attracting the attention of a person, for example the consumer. There has not been any significant appeal to the other senses, for example, the kinesthetic sensation of touch, to attract the attention of the consumer to the advertising.

It is also well known that many individuals have a nervous habit of clicking a pen or mechanical pencil mechanism in order to relieve emotional stress. Although this habit may provide some stress relief, it has the disadvantage of wearing upon the mechanism of the writing instrument itself.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is accordingly an object of the present invention to provide a clip with advertising for use upon a handheld instrument, for example a writing instrument, said clip appealing not only to the visual senses, but also to the sensation of touch and movement. The clip and more particularly the advertising will get markedly more attention by the consumer than a stationary advertising imprint.

It is thus another object of this invention to provide a method of attracting and maintaining the attention of a consumer to advertising by means other than a stationary picture on a device.

Still another object of this invention is to provide a handheld writing instrument that has incorporated into it a mechanism with a movable member that can help relieve nervous stress without wearing upon the pen writing tip extension mechanism.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide a method for the relief of nervous stress in a handheld instrument.

The objects of this invention are accomplished by an innovative type of clip that has a slidable member articulated into the clip. The slidable member can have indicia such as advertising or a logo placed upon it. The movement of the slidable member will be unusual to the typical consumer and will quickly attract the attention of the owner-consumer as well as their friends, co-workers, and any other passerby that sees the clip. Furthermore, by providing this slidable member upon the clip, a person, for example a consumer, will pay more attention to the advertising because they will tend to fidget, tinker, and play with the clip. This device appeals not only to the visual sense, but also the tactile sense of the consumer, thus attracting the attention of the consumer to the advertising or logo placed upon the slidable member. The consumer will be subconsciously exposed to the advertising by way of association with the tactile input even at times they are not looking at the advertising directly. This is an advantage over the prior known methods of advertising, by use of only stationary imprints and inserts, because the eye will be naturally drawn to the movement of the sliding clip member. Therefore, the movement of the slidable member will compel the consumer's eye's to focus upon the advertising.

Furthermore, this device allows a mechanism for the user to dissipate nervous stress without wearing away upon the pen mechanism itself. Many pens have been worn into exhaustion by the repeated clicking of the pen cartridge mechanism by an anxious or frustrated worker or student. The slidable member permits the user of the writing instrument to place wear upon the clip and not upon the cartridge mechanism. Another advantage of this slidable clip is that it is inexpensive to produce and attracts the attention of the consumer in a new way.

The handheld instrument of the present invention is comprised of an elongated body connected with a clip; said clip comprising an essentially rectangular shaped wire having two parallel rails and said clip having an upper end and a lower end; and said lower end connecting said rails; and

a slidable member having an inner segment, an outer segment, and a middle segment; said middle segment being smaller in diameter than said inner segment and said outer segment; whereby said middle segment of said slidable member fits between the two parallel rails and may articulate with said rails such that said slidable member is movable upwardly and downwardly some distance between the upper and the lower end of said clip.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The preferred embodiment of the present invention, representing the best mode contemplated, is illustrated in the accompanying drawings in which

10 FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a handheld writing instrument in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a side elevational view of a handheld writing instrument in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a side elevational view of the slidable member of the present invention;

15 FIG. 4 is a bottom plan view of the slidable member of the present invention; and

FIG. 5 is a vertical cross section through the slidable member of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

20 Referring now more specifically to the drawings, as shown in FIG. 1, the preferred embodiment of the present invention is a handheld writing instrument **100** comprising an elongated instrument body **110** and a clip **120**. The handheld instrument **100** in the preferred embodiment is a pen or other suitable handheld writing instrument. However, such handheld instruments may also include, but are not limited to, for example, a laser pointer, PDA stylus, handheld pocket tool, or pocket knife. The clip **120** comprises at least one rail **130**. A slidable member **200** is slidably connected with at least one rail **130** of said clip **120**.

25 As may be seen in FIG. 1, in the preferred embodiment, the clip **120** comprises an essentially

rectangular shaped track **115** having two parallel rails **130**, and having an upper end **140** and a lower end **150**. Said lower end **150** clip connects said parallel rails **130** together. The upper end **140** connects the clip **120** to the elongated instrument body **110**.

In this preferred embodiment the essentially rectangular track is u-shaped, comprising two essentially parallel rails **130** with a space between. In this preferred embodiment, the rails **130** are formed from metal wire with suitable elasticity, rigidity, and diameter to prevent the two parallel rails **130** from being spread apart during routine movements of the slidable member **200**.

Referring also now to FIG. 2, the slidable member **200** moves upwardly and downwardly between the upper end **140** and lower end **150** of the essentially rectangular track **115**. The metal wire is bent into a U-shape, or rectangular shape, at the lower end **150**, with the two free ends of the wire forming the upper end **140** of the clip **120** which is attached to the pen body **110** by a pen cap **160**. The lower end **150** of the clip **120**, however, is not limited to a U-shape or rectangular shape, and may also be various other geometric shapes.

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In some embodiments, the rails **130** may be formed from plastic or other suitable materials. The rails may be plated, for example with chrome, to give the clip **120** a more expensive and pleasing appearance. The upper end **140** of the clip **120** is firmly attached to the pen by a pen cap **160** while the lower end **150** of the clip **120** forms a closed loop such that the slidable member **200** cannot slip off of the lower end **150** of the clip **120**. In the preferred embodiment, there is a slight bend in the lower end **150** of the clip **120** away from the body **110** of the handheld instrument **100**, in the range of 0 degrees to 45 degrees, allowing easier insertion into a shirt pocket or other anchoring location.

25 The anchoring of the upper end **140** of the clip **120** to the handheld instrument body **110** may be by a pen cap **160**, or any one of many currently known means readily recognized by one skilled in the art. This may include, for example, a loop encircling the body **110** of the handheld instrument **100**, insertion of the upper ends **140** of the clip **120** into holes in the pen body **110**, or

by bending of the upper end **140** of the clip **120** over the top of the handheld instrument **100** and securing the upper end **140** with a cap.

As can be seen in FIG. 3 and FIG. 4, in the preferred embodiment, the slidable member **200** comprises three segments. The inner segment **180** is most proximal to the elongated instrument body **110**, and the outer segment **190** is the most distal from the elongated instrument body **110**.
5 The diameter of both the inner segment **180** and the outer segment **190** is greater than the distance between the two parallel rails **130**. This retains the slidable member **200** upon the parallel rails **130**. Between the inner segment **180** and the outer segment **190** is a narrower middle segment **170** that fits between the two parallel rails **130**. These various slidable member
10 segments may be separate pieces that are attached together during construction of the slidable member **200**, or the three segments may be formed in one piece by, for example, by injection molding of the slidable member **200**. The slidable member **200** of the clip may comprise, for example metal, plastic, wood, ceramic, or other suitable materials known to those in the art. In alternative embodiments, other ways of articulating a slidable member on one or more rails are equivalent.
15 For example, a one piece slidable member with 2 parallel channels that accommodate the two parallel rails could be utilized, or a slidable member may be connected to a single rail.

Referring now also to FIG. 5, in the preferred embodiment, the spacing between the parallel rails **130** is such that the middle segment **170** of the slidable member **200** fits between the parallel rails **130**. This arrangement allows the middle segment **170** to sit securely between the two parallel rails **130** of the pen clip **120** and still permits the slidable member **200** to slide between the two parallel rails **130** from the upper end **140** of the clip **120** to the lower end **150** of the clip **120**, without becoming dislodged. The rails are positioned so that there is sufficient clearance
20 from the inner segment **180** of the slidable member **200** to the handheld instrument body **110** to permit free movement of the slidable member **200**.

The user of the instrument **100** may fidget, play, squirm, wiggle, twitch, fuss, jitter, worry, tinker,

putter, and fool with the slidable member 200, moving it easily up and down the rail(s) 130. This serves the function of allowing the user to dissipate emotion stress and nervous energy. One advantage of this arrangement is that users who have a nervous habit of clicking or twisting the pen mechanism of a regular type of pen may instead fidget with slidable member 200 upon the clip 120 of the present invention and thereby avoid wearing out the pen writing mechanism.

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Other variations of slidably articulating a slidable member upon a pen clip will be readily recognized by those skilled in the art. For example, a variation of the slidable member 200 may be designed that articulates with a clip that is a substantially flat solid strip. For example, an embodiment of the slidable member 200 may be comprised of only the outer segment 190 which is then fitted with hooks that wrap around the outside of the substantially flat solid strip and slidably articulate the slidable member to the substantially flat solid strip. In yet another embodiment, for example, the slidable member may be designed to articulate with a clip that is a solid strip with a vertical narrow slot cut into the longitudinal center of the solid flat strip, and the middle segment 170 of the clip member is very narrow in diameter so that it may slide within the slot. In yet another embodiment, a slidable member could be one solid piece with channels drilled down either side to accept parallel wire rails. Yet other ways of slidably articulating a slidable member to a pen clip will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, there is indicia visible on an outer surface of said outer segment 190 of the slidable member 200. This indicia for example may include but not be limited to a logo, trademark, advertisement, emblem, label, stamp, feature, brand, brand name, insignia, crest, token, seal, decal, pitch, announcement, slogan, monogram, or even a political message. Such indicia need not be limited to letters or words, but can also be a photo, design, or other pictorial representation. Furthermore, such indicia may be raised or textured to provide even more tactile sensory input to a person, for example, a consumer. This indicia may be printed on the outer surface of the outer segment 190 or alternatively, as shown in FIG. 6, may be imprinted upon the middle segment 170 and below a transparent outer covering 195, whereby the indicia is visible but less likely to wear off over time. Such indicia, coupled with the

movement of the slidable member 200 markedly increases the attention of the consumer to advertising. Stationary advertising on pens is so common that consumers hardly pay attention to such advertising anymore. However, advertising on a slidable member will capture and hold the consumer's attention and is a valuable improvement in advertising methods. Furthermore, indicia will naturally attract the attention of the user as they fidget with the slidable member 200 and thus provide a valuable marketing tool for commercial purposes.

Still another advantage of the clip 120 is to give the pen or handheld instrument an attractive appearance. The slidable member 200 will be visible to others when the handheld instrument 100 is clipped onto, for example, a shirt pocket, exposing the message on the slidable member 200 to others. A passerby will naturally be curious about the slidable member 200. Thus the advertising not only captures the attention of the pen owner, but also others that are drawn to the pen in a shirt pocket, for example. This can provide even more advertising and marketing of products associated with the indicia on the slidable member 200. Such advertising method is especially useful in marketing to teenagers who will be drawn to the unusual sliding mechanism of the present invention.

In another embodiment, the slidable member 200 is designed so that it cannot be voluntarily removed from between the rails 130 without destroying the clip 120. This prevents the user from removing the advertising indicia. However, in yet still other embodiments, the slidable member 200 may be made so that it can be voluntarily removed from or placed between the rails 130. This may be accomplished by the inner segment 180 or outer segment 190 of the slidable member 200 being detachable from the middle segment 170. Methods for doing this, for example by means of a snap, screw, or twisting mechanism, would be recognized by those skilled in the art. The slidable member 200 can then be freely exchanged for one with a different indicia or picture on the outer surface of the outer segment 190. Thus the user could easily change the slidable member 200 to display different messages depending on the user's mood and wishes. Furthermore, more than one slidable member 200 could be attached on one pen. For example, two or more slidable members, each with pictures of the user's children or various products and

services to be advertised, may be applied to the clip **120**. The interchangeability of the slidable members **200** allows marketing departments and sales representatives to quickly modify the advertising on the pens without having to wait for the production of the entire writing instrument. Only new slidable members **200** would need to be distributed to the sales force. This reduces shipping costs in addition to the time necessary for advertising of newly developed products.

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Another aspect of the present invention is the novel method of getting the attention of a person, for example, a consumer for advertising purposes. The first step is constructing a slidable member **200** with indicia such as, for example, advertising or a logo upon the outer surface of said slidable member **200**. The second step is constructing a clip **120** comprising the slidable member **200** between two parallel rails **130**. The third step is placing said clip **120** upon a suitable handheld instrument body **110**, for example a pen. The fourth step is providing said handheld instrument **100** with said clip **120** to a person, for example, a consumer, whereby the indicia is repeated brought to the attention of said consumer while the consumer is fidgeting with said slidable member **200**.

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Still another aspect of the present invention is the novel method of relieving the nervous stress of a user. The first step is constructing a slidable member **200**. The second step is constructing a clip **120** comprising the slidable member **200** between two parallel rails **130**. The third step is placing said clip **120** upon a suitable handheld instrument body **110**, for example a pen. The fourth step is providing said handheld instrument **100** with said clip **120** to a user. The fifth step is said user playing and fidgeting with the slidable member **200** when the user is feeling anxious.

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The present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the essential spirit or attributes thereof. It is desired that the embodiments described herein be considered in all respects as illustrative, not restrictive, and that reference be made to the appended claims for determining the scope of the invention.